

# A Short Guide to the English Publishers

MY prophecy of a fortnight ago as to the death of the publishing season has been entirely fulfilled. We have had during the last fortnight peace celebrations, coal strikes, and no books at all. I cannot think of any book of the slightest importance that has seen the light during July.

This seems an admirable opportunity to talk about London publishers; anything more daring I never knew than for an author to talk at the top of his voice about publishers; but I am unlike almost every other author I know in this startling respect, that I like publishers. I believe them to be an honest race of men trying to keep the wolf from the door and quite ready to help the author, after the wolf has been so kept.

There, indeed, is the rub. Most authors expect, nay demand, that publishers shall look after their needs first and feed the little budding publishers afterward. But why?

A publisher is only human. Why should he feed Mr. Charles Garvice before his own little Matilda? The idea is all against nature.

Where, however, publishers do make a mistake is in pretending, as many of them do, that publishing never pays. Rich and popular authors often make the same mistake about their profession. Never pays? That is foolishness when one considers the knightships, the motor cars, the houses in the country and the little trips abroad. It pays, of course, very well, but it has its risks and dangers, and just now it must be as exciting as roulette.

I was asked the other day which were the six publishers who had, in my opinion, most nobly breasted the war.

Six is a large number; nevertheless it is a fact that in London six publishers have managed to keep their doors open and to maintain a definite connection with art and letters. Those six, it seems to me, are: Macmillan, Heinemann, Chatto & Windus, Martin Secker, Elkin Mathews and Constable.

Other firms, such as Hutchinson, Hodder & Stoughton, Methuen and Cassell, have published many books, some of them good ones, but their lists have been quite definitely material, and one has not watched them with any expectation of discovering novelty or genius.

The house of Cassell has been marvellously successful with its fiction during the war. It has fathered *Mr. Britling* and *Joan and Peter*, *The Pretty Lady*, *The Tree of Heaven* and *Mary Olivier* and many others; but Wells, Bennett and May Sinclair are old favorites whose faces have long been known.

Macmillans have been remarkable for the way in which they have maintained their honorable tradition and at the same time have linked up with the younger generation. They have given us books that should be classics—*Mr. Oliver's Ordeal* by Battie, Owen Wister's *Pentecost of Calamity*, Sir Sidney Colvin's great *Keats*, Edmund Gosse's *Swinburne*, Saintsbury's *History of the French Novel*, and in the same lists there have been works by such younger writers as Stephen Reynolds, James Stephens, Ralph Hodgson, Gerald O'Donovan, Stella Benson, Compton Mackenzie, Ernest Poole and Winfred Gibson. Here is surely an ideal development for a firm with the great history that Macmillans have behind them. Throughout the whole of the war their production has been admirable—paper, binding, type, have never sunk below a pre-war level.

Those, however, who are really interested in English fiction as an art have watched Heinemann's lists more closely than those of any other publisher.

I don't know who in these days are

## A London Letter From Hugh Walpole

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his readers; he has had in the past such men as Walter de la Mare, Edward Garnett and J. D. Beresford, but it is astonishing how, through so many years, he has kept his standard, so that now as twenty years ago one is almost certainly safe to find some sort of interest in a book with the Heinemann windmill stamped upon it.

I suppose that his especial prize during the war was Joseph Hergesheimer, but you in America had already discovered him. Heinemann may claim Miss Delafield, Miss Enid Bagnold and Miss Clemence Dane as his own especial captures, and there have also been men, like Mr. Macfarlane, of real promise. He has, of course, captured and held for many years now John Galsworthy, William de Morgan, George Moore and Masfield—no mean company.

Putting fiction on one side, the firm that has shown most originality during the war has been, I think, Chatto & Windus. One has never known in

what direction they were going to jump next. Only this spring they have been responsible for three books as unusual as *The Young Visitors*, Barbellion's *Journal of a Disappointed Man* and Sir Harry Johnston's *Gay-Donbeys*. They have given us plays by Arnold Bennett, sociological discussions by Wells, translations of Andri Gide and essays by Clive Bell.

Only in the direction of fiction are they not quite of sufficient enterprise. The only two novels of interest that I can at the moment remember their publishing during the whole of the war are the aforesaid *Gay-Donbeys* and Creighton's *History of an Attraction*, the latter most undeservedly neglected. I dare say there are others that I have forgotten, but there have been too many novels in their lists that have justified their existence neither financially nor artistically.

Elkin Mathews has been responsible, these four years, for a great deal of poetry, some of it good, some of it

very bad. He has persuaded a great many young men that they are what certain daily papers call "true singers," and by so doing has discovered one or two real poets.

Constable has enlivened our days with the works of Miss Macaulay, has discovered Mr. Sadler as a novelist and has published some good poetry.

There remains Mr. Martin Secker, the most truly individual and courageous of all the London publishers. His output during the war has been slight and at times has been in danger of resolving itself into Mr. Compton Mackenzie. Far his finest book during the war, in my humble opinion, has been Frank Swinnerton's *Nocturne*, a beautiful work, at least as sure of immortality as many grossly overrated mid-Victorian masterpieces. There have also been the poems and essays of T. C. Squire, the poems of Flecker and Maurice Baring, and this spring *The Queen of China*, the book of poetry by Edward Shanks that won last week the Hawthornden prize.

And what of the future? Are we to see great things, or are all the publishers going down together in a general débâcle to arise after many months as the producers of Bolshevik pamphlets? If that be so the South Sea Islands for me.

HUGH WALPOLE.

## An Iliad of Eats for All Food Addicts

By BENJAMIN DE CASSERES.

I HAVE been reading the Iliad of the lobster, the Paradise Lost of good digestion, the Pilgrim's Progress of the bean, the Inferno of the Welsh rabbit.

The author of this sublime literary mosaic is Alfred W. Hercules McCann, who cleaned out the Augean stables of the food warehouses, garrotted hundreds of professional baby poisoners and took the Nemean lion of food adulteration by his jaws and strangled him before a cheering and grateful public.

The book is titled *The Science of Eating*, which is a new and enlarged edition of *This Famishing World*. It is a book that no human being who eats should be without. If you do not eat, read it for its literary and dramatic quality. It is written by a man who thinks with his fists, writes with his brain—a fearless man writing on a subject of almost universal interest, food.

Mr. McCann is proof again, and definite proof, I hope that the commonplace does not exist for the dramatic imagination. Personally I only use food as a substitute for alcohol; but after reading for five hours into the very stomach of this book I become a food fan, a Fletcher "nut," a Galahad of the perfect meal.

Food is a spiritual essence. It breeds revolutions and cans communes. I understand now how three eggs, cooked three minutes, smeared over a dish of cod-fish might become by internal combustibility a dynamic thought that might fire

the obfuscated domes of a thousand prohibitionists or lay in ashes the staves of all the early morning rug beaters of Flatbush. For chaos or order depends on the quality of our eats.

But whether you believe in this sublime magic or not, it is the style of the book that will linger forever in your brain. Mr. McCann is (please copy, Mr. Publisher) the Blasco Ibanex of the belly, the Victor Hugo of the digestion, the John Milton of starches.

The book is divided into ten cantos. Canto One concerns the "human scrap heap." It is a magnificent prelude to Clean Living, Right Eating, and Red Blood. In the middle of this canto there is a *Dance of the Molars*.

Canto Two is a personally conducted tour through your tummy and other curious addenda thereabout. There are hints in this canto of the "dark brown taste." Now, we have found the simple lemon squeezed in a cup of cold water to be very effective in teasing back to a state of rationality the breakfast appetite. It is a pity that a man of Mr. McCann's vast food learning has not bespoken the simple four-cent lemon. But we remember the food poisoners he has sent to jail, and withhold criticism.

There's Canto Seven. It is an ode to sugar. Old brown sugar, sugaritis, new white sugar, the honey bee, glucose, glucosities, and so forth. He might have added a chapter here on the influence of sugar on scenario writers and "movie" directors. The "movies" to-day are the triumph of sweetness over light. How

few "movies" show any sign of fish? Fish, properly McCanned, makes phosphorus, and phosphorus makes gray matter.

Canto Eight treats of the "plugged" cow, America's kidneyeides and meatology. "Sink your canines into as many bloody, bawdy, kindless steaks as you have a mind to! Grind the juicy cadaver between your molars—if you have any molars!"—thunders our Lohengrin of Lettuce. Oh, you kidneyeides, lobster murderers and bean wantons, do you know the Dantesque pickle you are preparing for your elder years, when you will be fed on Borden's condensed and strained?

Are you looking into your lactic acid, creative and carbon dioxides? Dare you venture pumpernickel, haggis, lobscouse, scrapple or good old Philadelphia pepperpot without taking thought of that far-off dyspeptic day toward which all midnight gorgers move?

Well, if you believe eating is a "science," as Mr. McCann contends it is, you will find this the best book ever written on the subject by a man who knows his thesis; but if you believe, as I do, that eating is a pleasure, like loving, reading, golfing and drinking, it won't bother you much.

THE SCIENCE OF EATING. By ALFRED W. McCANN. George H. Doran Company.

INSPIRED by the example of the actors, the jacket writers have formed a union and are to call a strike the next time E. F. Benson sends in a novel.



"A romance which sweeps into a single tale the whole range of emotions and experience upon which human life and love and energy are built."—Philadelphia Press.

## THE BRANDING IRON

By Katharine Newlin Burt

"I wish I had written 'The Branding Iron,' for it is one of the strongest and best-told stories I have read. I look forward with confidence to its great success."

Rex Beach

"I consider 'The Branding Iron' an extraordinarily strong novel and the central woman character a memorable figure. Mrs. Burt has a remarkable gift."

Rupert Hughes

"'The Branding Iron' is one of the most exhilarating novels I ever read, combining really brilliant writing with a story that keeps you reading long after taps."

Henry Sell

Chicago News.

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Already in its Fortieth Thousand

Blus. \$1.65 Net  
At All Bookstores

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

4 Park St.  
Boston